



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

517 East Wisconsin Avenue

414 / 297-1700

Milwaukee, WI 53202

October 20, 2008

NEWS SUMMARY

Canadian Man Sentenced to Ten Years in Federal Prison and a Lifetime of Supervised Release for Transporting Child Pornography into the United States

United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic announced that Eric “Rick” Gauthier, 50, from Alberta, Canada, was sentenced to 121 months in prison on three counts of transporting child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. Gauthier was also ordered to serve a lifetime period of supervised release following his imprisonment.

According to court documents and hearings, Gauthier initially started chatting online with a citizen witness. One evening, Gauthier broadcast videos of child pornography from his residence in Canada to the citizen witness in the Eastern District of Wisconsin. The citizen witness contacted the FBI the following morning and reported this incident. As a result, an undercover officer engaged in online chats with Gauthier acting as a friend of the citizen witness. During these chats, Gauthier transported numerous videos of child pornography to the officer, via his webcam. These videos involved children as young as 18 months old being sexually assaulted.

Gauthier had previously planned a golf outing to Idaho and arranged to meet the undercover officer and the citizen witness at his hotel in Idaho. Gauthier promised to bring DVDs containing the child pornography videos with him. Gauthier was arrested in Lewiston, Idaho on February 14, 2008, after he traveled there from Canada. At the time of his arrest, Gauthier was in possession of DVDs containing the promised child pornography.

In imposing the 121 month sentence, on October 17, 2008, Chief Judge Rudolph T. Randa stated this was the worst case of child pornography that he had presided over to date.

This case emerged out of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. Specifically, this case was the result of joint investigation by the Milwaukee Police Department, Criminal Investigation Bureau’s High Technology Unit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation Cyber Crime Task Force in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Lewiston, Idaho and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Penelope L. Coblenz.

According to United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic, the “Department of Justice has made the protection of our nation’s children a top priority through Project Safe Childhood, and prosecutions such as this further this priority. This case is an example of the successful coordination of international, federal and local resources which resulted in the conviction of Eric Gauthier.”

#

For additional information contact:
LECC Coordinator Dean Pushnig or
Assistant United States Attorney Penelope L. Coblenz
(414) 297-1700